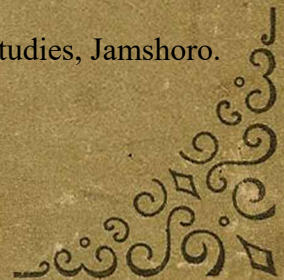




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Some Ancient Tribes of India

BY

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The Kambojas.

The Kambojas is one of the early vedic tribes. In the Sama Veda we find that the Sage Anandaja received instructions from two teachers, though the usual practice is to have one teacher only. The two teachers were, 1st Samba and 2nd Kamboja, who was distinguished for his Vedic learning. From this it can be deduced that the Kambojas in early vedic times were Vedic Indian People and not Iranian. Both the teachers of Sage Anandaja had received their education in vedic lore from the same sage, who belonged to the Madras People. The Madras and Kambojas were close neighbours in North West of India,

Nirukta, a text of about 500 B. C. tells us that the speech of the Kambojas was different from the ordinary Indian speech referring to the tribes who lived north west of the Indus, and who bore that name. The standard language in Yaska's time was the language of Madhyadesa a region round the Ganges-Jumna Doab. From Yaska's remarks we find that the Kambojas were Vedic people who had retained the original sense of an ancient verb (*savati*) while it was lost among other sections of the same people, who were separated from them by geographical barriers. Sir George Grierson however deduced from Yaska's remarks that, as *savati* is an Iranian not a Sanskrit word, the Kambojas cannot have been Indo-Aryans. They either spoke Sanskrit with an infusion of Iranian words to which they gave Indian inflexions, or spoke a language partly Indo-Aryan and partly Iranian.

Yaska connects the Kambojas with Kambala, blanket, and the word *kam*, love. The Kambojas were Kamaniyabhojas, or enjoyers of pleasant things. Yes, a warm blanket, a kambala, was very delightful to the people who lived in the cold climate of North West Provinces.

In the Mahabharata we find that at the great Rajasuya sacrifice, the Kamboja king presented to Yudhishthira "many of the best kinds of skins, woollen blankets made of the fur of animals living in burrows in the earth and also of cats—all inlaid with threads of gold....and the king of Kamboja, sent to him hundreds and thousands of black, dark and red skins of the deer called kadali, and also blankets (*kambala*) of excellent texture."

Panini lays down the rule that the word Kamboja denotes not only the Kamboja country or tribe, but also the Kamboja king. Panini belonged to the north-west of India, and therefore he had an accurate knowledge of the dress and customs of the Kambojas; he speaks of the Kambojas as *munda* or shaven-headed; they were in the habit of completely shaving their heads. The Sakas (Scythians) have their heads half shorn; the Yavanas (Greeks) and the Kambojas the whole head; the Paradas (inhabitants of Paradene) wear their hair free, and the Pahlavas (Persians) wear beards.

We will find out where Kamboja was situated. Rhys Davids puts it in the extreme north west of India with Dvaraka as its capital. Dr. Ayāṅgar in his *Ancient India* places it in the territory of modern Sindh and Gujarat, also Dr. P. N. Banerji in his *Public Administration in Ancient India* assigns Kamboja to a country near modern Sindh. Both these writers agree with Prof. Rhys Davids in placing the capital at Dvaraka. V. A. Smith places this place among the mountains of Tibet or Hindu Kush; he adds that the people spoke an Iranian language. Mc. Crindle says Kamboja was Afghanistan. The authors of the *Vedic Index*, Macdonell and Keith, state that the Kambojas had settled in the north west of the Indus, and were the Kambuiya of the old Persian inscriptions. According to Sir Ch. Eliot (*Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. I.) the Kambojas were probably Tibetans; he calls them an ambiguous race who were perhaps the inhabitants of Tibet or its border lands. M. Foucher points out that the Nepalese tradition applies the name Kambojadesa to Tibet. Rapson in Vol. I. *Cambridge History of India*, in a footnote on page 334 says "equally doubtful would be the attempt to connect the name of Cambyses (O. P. Ka (m) bujiya) with the frontier people of Kamboja....." Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhuri in his *Political History of India* points out from a passage of the *Mahabharata* we learn that Rajapura was the home of the Kambojas. The association of the Kambojas with the Gandharas enables us to identify this Rajapura with the Rajapura mentioned by Hsuan Tsang, which is situated on the south or south east of Punch.

About the time of the Buddha Kamboja was one of the sixteen great States (*Mahajanapadas*) that were most prominent in India.

In the *Harivamsa* we read that the people of Kamboja were formerly, Ksatriyas. The Kambojas, Sakas, Yavanas and other Ksatriya tribes were slowly degraded to the condition of sudras on account of their omission of the sacred rites, and of their disregard of the Brahmins. From *Arthashastra* we find that the corporations of warriors of Kamboja and other countries lived by agriculture, trade and profession of arms.

The Mahabharata is full of praises of the excellent horses of Kamboja. We read that the king of Kamboja presented to Yudhisthir 300 horses of variegated colours speckled like the partridge and having fine noses like the Suka bird. In the great battle of Kuruksetra the fast and powerful horses of Kamboja were of great service.

One of the Jatakas gives us valuable information that the Kambojas used to capture their horses in the forest by tempting them into an enclosed space by means of aquatic plants smeared with honey.

Poet Kalidas in his Raghuvarsa sings about Raghu meeting the Kambojas after defeating the Hunas on the bank of the Oxus. The Kambojas submitted to Raghu. An immense treasure including excellent horses was offered as tribute to Raghu by the Kambojas.

In the Mahabharata in the geographical enumeration of the peoples of India, the Kambojas are located in the north. They were the allies of the Kurus and rendered them great service in the Kuruksetra war, through the bravery of their King Sudaksina. Bhishma extols the bravery of Kamboja king Sudaksina; he states "In my opinion Sudaksina of Kamboja is equal to one Ratha. The best of the chariot warriors under him are strikers with fierce force. The Kambojas, O, great king, will cover the land like a swarm of locusts". When the Kaurava army took their position on the field, the Kambojas occupied the van of Duryodhana's army; we are told "The Pauravas, the Kalinyas and the Kambojas with their King Sudaksina and Kshemadhanva and Salva took up their positions in front of Duryodhana". The Kambojas were in the thickest of the fight. Their King Sudaksina was finally killed in a duel with Atjuna. The verses which describe him as he lay slain on the battle-field are worth quoting for their poetic imagery :

"Like a charming Karnikara tree which in the spring grows gracefully on the top of a hill with beautiful branches, lying in the grove when uprooted by the tempest, the prince of the Kambojas, accustomed to sleep on the most precious bed, lay lifeless on the bare ground. Adorned with precious ornaments, graceful, possessing eyes of coppery hue, wearing around his head a tiara of gold, radiant like the flames of fire, the mighty armed Sudaksina, prince of the Kambojas, felled by Partha with his arrows, and lying dead on the ground, appeared beautiful like a charming hill with a flat summit.

We thus find the Kambojas leading a large army in the Kuruksetra battle and laying down their lives like true Kshatriyas. In the later sections

of the Mahābhārata we read that their country was over run by barbarous hordes, and the ancient population was looked down as one of the barbarous peoples. The Kambojas were enumerated along with many peoples not included in Indo-Aryan society, and they are placed among the barbarous peoples of the Uttarapatha (northern regions). They were degraded to the rank of the Sudras for want of Brahmanas in their country. This shows that the Kambojas were losing touch with Brahmanical society, owing perhaps to admixture with barbarous invaders from the North,

We learn from the Vayupuran that after killing the Haihayas King Saṅkara was busy destroying the Kambojas, Sakas, Yavanas, Pahlavas and others. Taking into consideration the advice of a preceptor, Saṅkara set the Kambojas free after having completely shaved their heads.

In the Jatakas we read that the Kambojas were a north western tribe who had lost their original Aryan customs and became barbarous. We find that Sirihamsya who came from Kamboja conquered the city of Ratanapura. He feared the power and influence of Buddhist monks, and arranged for an wholesale slaughter of about 3000 from Jeyyapura, Vijayapura and Ratanapura, in a forest. Many shrines were demolished and books were burnt at the same time.

Missionaries were sent by Emperor Asoka to the nations on the borders of his empire, viz. the Kambojas, Yavanas, etc., with the object of converting them to Buddhism. In V. A. Smith's Asoka, Rock Edict XIII celebrates their conversion; and Rock Edict V tells us that censors were created by Asoka for the establishment of the law of piety, for the increase of the law, and for the welfare and happiness of the Kambojas, Gandharas and others living on the western frontier of his dominions.

In the ninth century A. D. Devapala, the great King of the Pala dynasty of Bengal defeated the Kambojas. But a century after the Kambojas the reign of the Pala kings of Bengal, terminated. In the middle of the tenth century A. D. the Kambojas again attacked North Bengal and its present inhabitants (of Koch, Mech, and Palia) are descended from them. The Kamboja rulers were expelled by Mahipala I, the 9th King of the Pala line, who was reigning in A. D. 1026; he regained the throne of his ancestors about A. D. 978 or 980.

The Gandharas.

Gandhara formed an integral part of India from the earliest time of Indo-Aryan civilization; it is a unique country in India, for its history can be traced without any break from Rīgvedic times down to the present

day. The Gandharis or the people of Gandhara are mentioned in the hymns of the Rigveda ; in other Vedic works, in the Epics and Purāṇs, and also in Buddhist books,

Gandhara was on the north-west frontier ; the neighbouring tribes were the Kambojas, Madras and others. Gandhara comprised the modern districts of Peshawar in the N. W. Frontier Province and Rawalpindi in the Punjab ; but in old Persian inscriptions it seems to include also the district of Kabul in Afghanistan ; Rhys Davids says that Gandhara (modern Kandahar) was the district of East Afghanistan, probably including the North West Punjab. Vincent Smith concurs with this view taking that Gandhara was equivalent to the north west Punjab and the adjoining regions. Eduard Meyer in his article on Persia in the Encyclopædia Britannica writes :—"The dividing line between Iranian and Indian is drawn by the Hindu-Kush and the Suliman mountains of the Indus district. The valley of the Kabul (Cophen) is already occupied by Indian tribes, especially the Gandarians ; and the Satagydae (Persian Thataḡu) there resident were presumably also of Indian stock." Prof. Meyer expressly adds that Cyrus appears to have subjugated the Indian tribes of the Patopanisu (Hindu Kush) and in the Kabul Valley the Gandarians ; Darius himself advanced as far as the Indus. Dr. S. K. Aiyangar in his Ancient India states that Gandhara was equivalent to East Afghanistan, extending from the Afghan mountains to the district some what to the east of the Indus. Dr. Bhandarkar in his Carmichael Lectures holds that Gandhara included the western Punjab and East Afghanistan ; its capital was Taxila where ruins are spread near Saṛakala in the Rawalpindi District of the Punjab. In the Ain-i- Akbari, Gandhara forms the district of Pulely lying between Kashmir and Attock. N. L. Dey in his "Geographical Dictionary" says Gandhara comprised the modern district of Peshawar and Hoti Murdan, that is the Eusofzai country. Cunningham in the Ancient Geography relying on the two Chinese pilgrims, Fa Hein and Hsuan Tsang gives the boundaries of Gandhara as follows ; Laghman and Jalalabad on the west ; on the north the hills of Swat and Bunir ; the Indus on the east ; and the hills of Kalabagh on the south. Let us see what the Greek writers say about this ; Strabo puts the country of the Gandarai, which he calls Gandaritis, between the Khoaspes (Kunar) and the Indus, and along the river Kophes (Kabul). It must have been known to the Greeks as early as the time of Hekataios who called Kaspapyros a "Gandaric city". Herodotus mentions the Gandarioi. Rennell in his 'Memoir of a map of Hindustan' placed the people to the west of Bactria in the province afterwards called Margiana, while Wilson took them to be the people south of the Hindu Kush, from

about the modern Kandahar to the Indus, and extending into the Punjab and to Kashmir.

From the above, it appears that the boundaries of the country varied at different times of its history. At one time it included the Afghan district round Kandahar, but afterwards it receded to the mountains on the Indian frontier.

The Vedic Aryans in very ancient times had a knowledge of the Gandharis for in the Rîgveda the long wool of the sheep reared by the Gandharis is referred to; Lomasa the queen of King Bhavya, who ruled on the banks of the Sindhu (Indus) says to her husband "I am covered with down like a ewe of the Gandharins".

In the Atharvaveda Takman or fever is consigned to the Gandhari and Mujavants, the Angas and Magadhs; the two latter are tribes of Bihar. Macdonell and Keith in the Vedic Index explain that the latter two tribes are apparently the Eastern limit of the poet's knowledge; the two former the Northern.

In the Brahmana literature also we find mention of the Gandharis. I quote from Chandogya Upanishad, 6-14.

"Just as, my dear, one might lead away from the Gandharas a person with his eyes bandaged and then abandon him in an uninhabited place; as there he might be blown forth either to the east, to the north, or to the south; since he had been led off with his eyes bandaged and deserted with his eyes bandaged; (2) as, if one released his bandage and told him "In that direction are the Gandharas; go in that direction", he would, if he were a sensible man, by asking his way from village to village, and being informed, arrive home at the Gandharas—even so here on earth one who has a teacher knows; "I belong here only so long as I shall not be released (from the body). Then I shall arrive home".

The next period of Vedic literature is the period of the Sutras. The purpose of the Sutras, so called from the word sutra, thread, is to afford a clue through the mazes of Brahmanical learning contained in the Brahmanas. We find people of Gandhara mentioned in the sutras. Rapson in the first vol. of Cambridge History of India writes "At the end of the sixth century B. C. early in the period to which the Sutras belong, the Persian Empire held two provinces in N.W. India Gandhara, the present districts of Peshawar and Kohistan".

war and Rawalpindi, and the "Indian" province, that is to say the country of the lower Indus."

The Mahabharata has many references about Gandhara. A King of the Kurus married the daughter of Suvala, king of Gandhara. We read that Arjun went to the Punjab where he had a great fight with the son of Sakuni, King of Gandhara. The Gandharan army was put to flight, but Arjun spared the life of Sakuni's son.

The Gandharas under the command of their King Sakuni formed a powerful part of the Kuru army. They gave great support riding on their fast horses. They like their neighbours the Kambojas reared a large number of horses, and fought on horseback.

The Gandharis are also mentioned in the Purans.

In the days of Asoka and his immediate followers Gandhara was one of the most flourishing seats of Buddhism. From the Rock Edict we find that Asoka appointed Dharma-Mahamatras (high officers in the department of dharma or religious conduct) to further the welfare and happiness of the Gandharas.

Fa. Hien who visited India in the fifth century A. D. states that Dharma vivardhana, son of Asoka, ruled there. (Gandhara).

Hsuan Tsang visited India in the seventh century A. D. He has described the ruined state of monasteries and shrines which two hundred years ago were standing perfect. According to him, the kingdom of Gandhara was about 1000 li (a li is equal to 576 metres) from north to south. On the east it bordered on the river Sin (Sindhu). The capital was called Po-lu-sha-pu-lo, i. e. Purusapura. The royal family was extinct, and the kingdom was ruled by deputies from Kapisa. The towns and villages were deserted, but the country was rich in cereals, and sugarcane, and produced a variety of fruits and flowers. The Chinese pilgrim continues "The climate is warm and moist. The disposition of the people is timid and soft; they love literature, and while most of them belong to heretical schools, a few believe in the true law, i.e. Buddhism. "In the town of Pi-lo-tu-lo, i. e. Salatala, he observes, Panini was born.

The early capitals of Gandhara were Pushkalavati, that is abounding in lotuses, and Taxila. The former stood on the west, and the latter to the east of the Indus. In early times Gandhara territory lay on both the sides of the Indus, but Mc Crindle says it was later confined to the western side. The Chinese pilgrim knew Purusapura, i.e. Peshawar as the capital; but

we find in Rapson's Ancient India that during the time of Greek rule, Kapisa was the capital of Gandhara.

The Chinese name for Taxila, the eastern capital was Shi-shi-ch'en, that is "severed" head. The legend runs that when Budha was in this city he gave his head away in charity, and the city took its name from this occurrence.

Arrian describes the city as great, wealthy and populous. Strabo and Hsuan Tsang praise the fertility of the soil. Pliny calls it a famous city. Asoka took the city. After Taxila's submission to Alexander the great in the second century B. C. it became the province of Graeco-Bactrian monarchy. It was conquered in B. C. 126 by Indo-Sythian Sus or Arabs; then in B. C. 78 it was taken under Kaniska. About the middle of the 5th century A. D. it was visited by Apollonius of Tyana and his companion Damis; the city is described as about the size of Nineveh, walled like a Greek city; but the streets were narrow though well arranged. Taxila must have been destroyed long before the Mahomedan invasion, for no Mahomedan author, who has written upon India, has made any mention of it.

Cunningham says that Taxila was near Shah-dheri one mile north east of Kala-ka-sarai, in the extensive ruins of a fortified city around which no less than 55 stupas, 28 monasteries and 9 temples could be traced. Dr. Bhandarkar in his Carmichael Lectures states that in Asoka's time Taxila was not the capital of Gandhara for Gandhara was not in Asoka's dominions proper, but was feudatory to him. This is confirmed by Ptolemy who states that Gandharai country was situated to the west of the Indus with its city Proklais, i.e. Pushkaravati.

Husan Tsang visited Taxila in the seventh century A. D. when it was a dependency of Kashmir.

Taxila figures prominently in Buddhist Jatakas and Jain stories. It is associated with Mahavira the founder of Jainism. In ancient India Taxila was a great seat of learning. Various arts and sciences were taught there and students from different parts of India went there. Here magic charms and spells for understanding the cries of animals were taught. Only Brahmins and Ksatriyas were admitted to the university.

Prof. Rapson in his Ancient India states that Cyrus (558-530 B.C.) conquered Gandhara, and it remained under the Persians for about 200 years. Alexander the Great took it in B. C. 331, under his sway together

with the Persian province of 'India' or 'the country of the Indus'. Then Gandhara became a feudatory of Asoka; then it fell under Greek Kings. From a catalogue of coins in the Punjab Museum prepared by Whitehead we find that Euthydemus (about 230-195, B.C.) conquered Gandhara. R. D. Banerji presumes that it was Diodotus II who had conquered, as some gold coins of his reign were discovered by Sir John Marshall in the ruins of Taxila. Whitehead's supposition is more correct for Gandhara was under Maurya empire till Asoka's death in B. C. 227, for the house of Diodotus was supplanted by Euthydemus in 230 B. C.

A Greek prince Eucratides (B. C. 175-155) snatched Gandhara with other territories from Demetrius the 4th Bactrian King. Then came the Saka satraps in Kapisa and Taxila; they were finally overpowered by the Kushanas. At the end of the 5th century A. D. Gandhara was occupied by the Hunas. We come to the 9th century when Lalliya founded the Hindu Shahiya dynasty, and established Ohind on the Indus as his capital. In 1021 A. D. the last King of the Shahiya dynasty was defeated on the banks of the river Tosi by Sultan Mahomed of Gazni. After this no account is found of the Hindu Rule in Gandhara, except Bhimpal who ruled for 5 years there.

We will end this paper after shortly speaking about the trade relations of Gandhara. The Jatakas show trade relations between Kashmir-Gandhara Kingdom and the north eastern Kingdom of Videha. Rapson (Cambridge History of India, Vol I, page 317) writes about the Videhas as one of the numerous clans possibly of Tibeto Chinese origin, who inhabited Tirhut (the districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga in N. Bihar.) The Gandharan traders were mostly horse-dealers, for Gandharan horses were considered the best of all. Valuable blankets or woollen shawls were produced there. From Brown's Coins of India we find that it was in Gandhara that the finest "double die" coins were struck.

The Rastrikas.

In the Rock Edicts of Asoka, the Rastrikas, along with the Andhras Bhojas and other tribes, are mentioned as vassal tribes within Asoka's dominions. The Rastrikas are not mentioned in the Aitareya Brahmana for they may not have come into prominence at that time.

Beyond the King's dominions of Asoka, on the south, beyond the limits of the provinces of Avanti and Kalinga, there were the Rashtrikas of the Maratha country, the Bhojas of Berar, etc.

In the cave inscriptions of Nanaṣṣaṣṭ, the most valuable is of the queen of Simuka, founder of the Andhra line. She was the daughter of a Mahārāṣṭri, i.e. a king of the Rashtrikas; and it can be concluded that the incorporation of the Maratha country in the Andhra empire had been ratified by a matrimonial alliance between the two royal houses.

On two occasions Kharavela invaded the Andhra dominions in the Deccan. In his second year he sent a large army of horses, elephants, foot-soldiers and chariots to the west in defiance of Satakurni; and in his fourth year he humbled the Rashtrikas of the Maratha country and the Bhojakaṣ of Berar, both feudatories of the Andhra Kings of Prarishthana, the modern Paithan on the north bank of the Godavari in the Aurangabad District of Hyderabad. The Hathigumpha inscription shows that Kharavela King of Kalinga, mentioned above, appeared in the field as a new combatant in about B. C. 150.

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